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# Food and Home Notes

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Black beans may also be called black "turtle soup" beans according to marketing specialists with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These are the dry beans that may be used in thick soups and in oriental and Mediterranean dishes.

\* \* \*

Ground beef chuck is excellent for a beef burger or as "salisbury steak". It usually has less fat and more lean meat than ground beef, and, if so, will shrink less in cooking. Ground chuck has enough fat for good flavor and juiciness.

\* \* \*

Instant nonfat dry milk is a dairy product with the fat and water removed from pasteurized fluid milk. The process that produces it makes large flakes to dissolve "instantly" in water.

\* \* \*

Split peas are called such because they are actually split during processing----a machine breaks them in half after their skins have been removed.

## CHERRY TREES

### .....NEED WATCHING!

Cherry growers, non-commercial as well as commercial, are being alerted to a disease (a virus infection) that affects all sweet cherry varieties. The problem-area now is in Washington state, Oregon and California--but, any suspicious symptoms should be reported to the agricultural agent or state or federal plant disease specialists, according to officials of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The little cherry virus infection has no known cure so affected trees must be cut down and burned. The dominant disease symptom is in the fruit. The cherries are pointed and one-third to one-half smaller than usual. They are also lighter in color and bland in taste. It is possible that the tree itself may not be affected.. however, some varieties have infected leaves. Actually the one positive identification can be made by bud grafting or microscopic tests.

Prior to this year, damage from little cherry virus in the United States had been limited to a few noncommercial trees in northern Washington.

## HEALTH FOODS

### — AND WHERE WE ARE

Health food markets are more popular in the United States and in Europe than ever before, according to a survey by the Economic Research Service/U.S. Department of Agriculture. What, then, is "health food"? Each answer you get may be a little different, but a Health Food Store apparently can only be defined as one that calls itself that.

Inside such a store, the range might be fresh produce and bulk staples to food supplements, vitamins, minerals and herbs. Or it may be vegetarian or include animal foods. Some foods for special diets, allergies, diabetes or weight-loss or organically produced foods all fit the same pattern of interest and are usually found in a Health Store. Most of the stores also produce literature and often cooking and food equipment.

According to one listing there were 750 health food manufacturers (in 1976) -- up from 572 manufacturers listed in 1972. Most of the stores doubled their sales from 1971 to 1972. According to some estimates, the projected view is for 3 billion dollars to be spent on health foods in 1980. Even though on the total market health foods are putting the food industry through some turmoil, the total volume in the supermarket is only projected to be about 1 percent in 1980.

The food industry has already cut down on its use of preservatives partially because the public has questioned how much is really needed. The baby food industry was the first to drop "added salt, artificial flavorings and/or flavor enhancers."

What other results are identifiable probably due to an increased interest in health foods? There is an upswing in the use of natural breakfast foods, yogurt sales and use of ethnic or unusual foods. New labels often call attention to the new "natural look". Now there are also whole wheat versions of most boxed goods, English muffins, and doughnuts.



## ON EATING LAMB



Americans are eating less lamb. Less, and less, in fact. Our lamb consumption figures now are among the world's lowest, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Back in 1930 and 1940 we consumed a high of about 6 pounds per person---by 1976 we were consuming about 1½ pounds.

Why are Americans eating less lamb? Shrinking supplies and rising retail prices apparently are the reasons for the waning consumption figures, as reported by USDA's Economic Research Service. Lamb is one of two items (veal is the other) in the meat, poultry and fish category listed on a long-term downward trend in per capita consumption in the United States. The downward trend in lamb consumption, however, appears to be almost worldwide.

Lamb production, of course, is a byproduct of wool production. Since the early 1950's, the number of lamb and sheep on farms and ranches has fallen from about 30 million to about 13 million in 1976. Production of wool has declined from a high of about 300 million pounds to about 110 million pounds in 1976. And what has happened to the interest in wool? It has lost out to man-made fibers.

It is also expensive to have a herd of sheep. Labor is a big factor. And, coyotes have contributed to the lower lamb production figures. There is also a limited demand because many Americans just do not eat lamb at all...so the market is highly specialized. Consumers in higher income brackets (\$15,000 or more) consume more lamb per year, as opposed to people earning less than \$7,000. Many Americans who were not raised on lamb do not eat it and high prices discourage experimentation.

On the away-from-home market, lamb is also at the bottom of the list. One of the reasons for this is, again, the high cost of lamb. Another reason may be that lamb is not readily adaptable to the "fast-food" places which have enjoyed such rapid growth.

However--in some other parts of the world lamb is consumed in much higher quantities. In the Middle East, the British Isles with Australia--they consume 43 pounds per person--the highest in the world.

## THE OUTLOOK

### --ON POULTRY AND EGGS

- \* Prospects for the egg, broiler, and turkey industries in 1978 point to increased production and lower market prices.
- \* Expected growth in the general economy and a continued uptrend in consumers' incomes will help bolster the demand for poultry meat and eggs in 1978.
- \* Wholesale prices in 9 cites through September averaged 41.9 cents a pound, slightly above a year earlier.
- \* Prices will decline more than usual in November and December because of the sharp increase in marketings. Prices in late November and December may drop to the mid-30's of a year earlier despite higher than year-earlier competing meat prices.
- \* Broiler prices in 1978 will be bolstered by increased consumer incomes and lower beef supplies.
- \* If broiler output during January-June 1978 increases 5 to 7 percent from 1977 levels as now seems likely, broiler prices could average in the upper 30's compared with 41.6 cents a pound during January-June 1978.
- \* Turkey production is expected to show a moderate increase in 1978...and larger production of competing meats and turkey will likely result in a moderate decline in turkey prices in 1978.
- \* Egg production is expanding in late 1977 and is expected to continue to increase in 1978. Egg prices in 1978 will come under pressure from increased supplies and will likely average moderately below 1977 levels.
- \* If egg production in the first half of 1978 runs 2 to 3 percent above 1977 levels, as now seems probable, egg prices will continue below a year earlier.

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